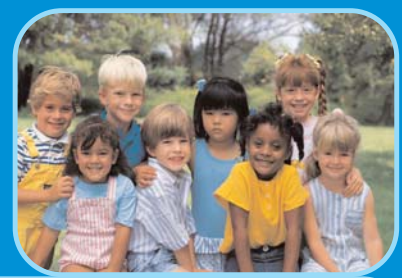


For the Children



Winter 2005



Foster/Adoptive Parent News

Adoption Finalization

by: Tamara Scott, SSP

The bonds of foster care result in adoption for over 50 children

Over 50 children will soon be celebrating the gift of a new last name as they transition from foster care to a permanent, loving family. In honor of National Adoption Month, San Bernardino County will be holding its annual Adoption Finalization Event at 12:15 p.m. on December 2, 2005, at the Ontario Convention Center.

The Department of Children's Services facilitates more than 500 adoptions every year. "Adoption is clearly the best possible outcome when a child's birth parents are not an option," said Department of Children's Services Director **Cathy Cimbalo**. "Finding stability and permanence for the children in the foster care system is one of the department's most important goals. The Adoption Finalization Event celebrates both the children and their adoptive families as they legally become a family. The true goal is met long before, when they become a family in their hearts. Although the children benefit greatly from having a permanent family, it is usually the adoptive parents who believe they have received the greatest gift."

A 29 Palms family of five, a Marine Corp Staff Sergeant and his wife, will be including the sixth member at the event, a "Safe Arms" baby. Hospitals are required to accept voluntarily surrendered infants (72 hours or younger) with no identification requirements. This child can then be placed in a home. The family welcomes this new addition and are in the process of being sent to the East Coast in December where a deployment to IRAQ is a possibility.

We also have families coming from as far as Georgia, Alabama, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Illinois and Colorado to participate in this event.

All of the children, who have been living with their prospective adoptive parents for some time, will be formally adopted in ceremonies performed by Presiding Judge **Peter H. Norell**, Presiding Judge **James McGuire**, Juvenile Court, Judge **David Cohn**, Commissioner **Deborah Daniel**, and Hearing Officer **Robert Fowler**.

Following the event, the media will have an opportunity to interview some of the new families, judges and other participants.

In This Issue

Adoption Finalization	1
California State Association Foster Parent Training Conference	2
Life Books	2
IEHP Open Access Numbers	2
State Foster Parent Associations/State Care Provider Associations Representatives	3
Traditions	4
Civil Penalties Alert	4
Holiday Safety Tips	5
What's Coming	6
New Foster Parent Association Presidents.....	6

California State Foster Parent Association Training Conference

The California State Foster Parent Association held its 29th Annual Training Conference in Oakland, California October 20th – 23rd. The County of San Bernardino was proud to send over 50 of our foster parents to the conference. The theme for this year's conference was "Our Focus is Families."

The annual foster parent conference provides our foster and adoptive families the opportunity to network with other families from all counties in the state of California, and to attend training on various topics so they can better care for the children placed in their homes. By all accounts the conference was a success. The workshop topics were educational and of great interest, not only to the foster parents but to the San Bernardino Department of Children's Services staff who also attended the conference as well. A big thank you to all the committee members who helped plan this conference, it is a huge undertaking and we appreciate all the hard work they put in. We would also like to thank the foster parents from San Bernardino County who were able to attend the conference, we know with your busy schedules this was a big commitment for you, it just shows how dedicated you are to our children.



Life Books

by: Susan D. Palmer, LCSW

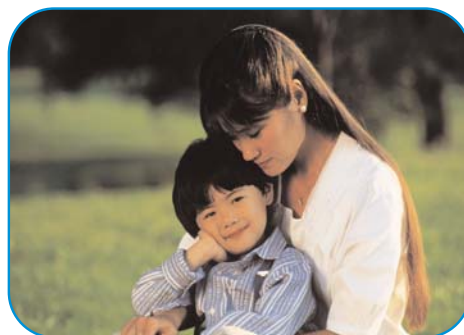
I'm often asked, "What exactly is a Life Book?" Quite simply, a Life Book is the unique story of a child's life. Historically, Life Books have been used to prepare children in the Child Welfare system for permanent placement. But, a Life Book can be a valuable tool for helping all children in care.

Life Books resemble the ever-popular scrapbook. There are photographs and personal mementos from the child. But, Life Books are much more. Life Books serve as permanent and concrete link to the child's past. It provides the child with information about their birth family and their personal history. It's a story that once written, the child will be able to hear over and over again.

Often children enter the Child Welfare system without a clear understanding of how they came to be in foster care. Was it something they did? What happened to their birth parents? Where are their siblings? A Life Book serves as a tool to address these and other issues. It provides a means to work with children, and at the same time lets the adult working with the child know what the child is thinking and how they are feeling.

Ideally, all children in the Child Welfare system could benefit from having a Life Book. Foster parents can help make this happen by starting a book when a child is placed with them. Keep a record and take pictures of the child's progress while they are in your home. Gather whatever information you can about the child, record special events, and visits with birth family. And, if the child should leave your home, make sure their book goes with them.

Life Books are an invaluable tool to help the children we have in care.



IEHP OPEN ACCESS PHONE NUMBER:

NOTE: When calling IEHP for health care information on a foster child placed in your care, please use the following phone number for a direct connection to the Open Access Unit.

1 (800) 706-4347



STATE FOSTER PARENT ASSOCIATIONS/ STATE CARE PROVIDER ASSOCIATIONS REPRESENTATIVES

San Bernardino Foster Parent Association:

Anita Hearne, President PHONE: (909) 336-0834
P. O. Box 2307 FAX: none
Lake Arrowhead, CA 92352 EMAIL: none

Association Meeting:

3rd Monday-7:00pm
Fellowship Hall
First Church of God
2595 Date St., SBDO
No meetings in December

Foster and Relative Emphasis Association (FARE):

Robert Manghane, President PHONE: (760) 949-0834
15012 Orange Street FAX: none
Hesperia, CA 92345 EMAIL: none

3rd Monday - 6:00pm - 9:00 pm
Victorville CPS
15480 Ramona Ave.

Inland Valley Foster Parent Association/Southern Regional Vice President:

Patricia Negus, President PHONE: (909) 628-4023
12419 Oaks FAX: (909) 902-9969
Chino, CA 91710 EMAIL: none

1ST Monday - 6:30pm - 9:30 pm
Ontario Doubletree Hotel
222 N. Vineyard Ave.
**No meetings in January, July, August,
October & December**

Morongo Basin Foster Parent Association:

Kathy Bingham, President PHONE: (760) 365-4028
7012 Prescott Avenue FAX: (760) 365-4028(call first)
Yucca Valley, CA 92284 EMAIL: none

2nd Thursday-6:30 pm
Pomona Bank
57291-29 Palms Hwy
No meetings in July, August or December

Victor Valley Loving Hearts Association:

Ethel Moon, President PHONE: (760) 247-7836
15213 Ramona Avenue FAX: (760) 247-7837
Apple Valley, CA 92307 EMAIL: ethel.jim@verizon.net

3rd Thursday - 7:00pm - 9:00 pm
Victorville CPS
15480 Ramona Ave.
No meetings in July, August or December

High Desert Care Provider Association:

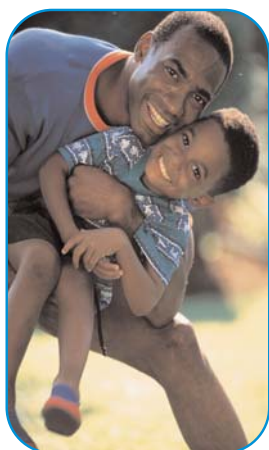
Pat Mathews, President PHONE: (760) 253-7726
25524 Dayton Avenue FAX: (760) 253-7726
Barstow, CA 92311 EMAIL: froggie@mscomm.com

3rd Tuesday - 6:30pm-8:30pm
Victorville CPS
15480 Ramona Ave.
No meetings in July, August or December

GREAT/ Kinship Care Foster Parent Association:

Esther Jett, President PHONE: (909) 481-0710
10942 Wilson Ave FAX: none
Alta Loma, CA 91737 EMAIL: none

2nd Thursday - 10:00am - Noon
Whole Enchilada Restaurant
10276 Foothill Blvd.
Rancho Cucamonga
No meetings in July & August



California State Foster Parent Association:

Cora Pearson, President PHONE:(310) 539-0268
24414 Marigold Avenue FAX: (310) 539-8120
Harbor City, CA 90710 EMAIL: none

Nina Coake, Past President PHONE:(909) 947-8323
1456 E. Philadelphia Sp 248 FAX: none
Ontario, CA 91761 EMAIL: none

California State Care Providers Association:

Fred Leiner, President PHONE:(818) 998-4461
9849 Glade Avenue FAX: (818) 998-4204
Chatsworth, CA 91311 Email: fred@fosterparents.com

Foster Care Ombudsman:

1-877-846-1602

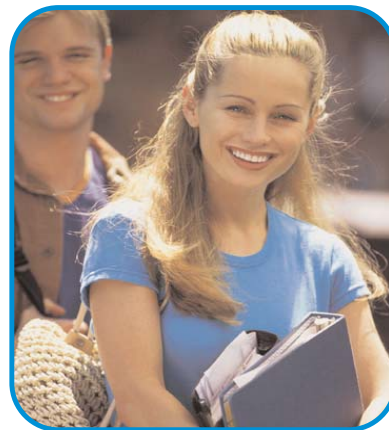
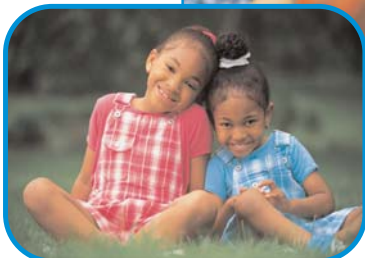


Traditions

Holidays can be a difficult time for foster and adoptive children. They are usually missing their birth families, their homes and their traditions. These children have been taken from the home and environment they know and placed in a new home where they are not sure what is going to happen, especially during the holidays. It is important to be aware of what the child may be feeling and how to make them feel more comfortable in your home. Think about your traditions or rituals that you have during the holidays. On Thanksgiving, do you eat at noon or later in the day? Do you watch the Macy's parade or only football? Do you all sit down to eat or is it buffet style? Think about how you feel knowing what to expect. Would you like to have everything changed without your input? These children have had everything changed but you can give them input and incorporate some of their traditions to insure the holidays are a bit less stressful for them.

It is a good idea to talk to a child about what they enjoyed during past holidays and what they expect the holiday to be like. Start with sharing your favorite memories and your family's traditions. Ask about what their holidays were like and what they enjoyed. What were the child's favorite memories? What would they like to have happen during this holiday? What traditions of yours sound fun and exciting to them? Keep it simple for them to understand and not feel overwhelmed. Be aware that some memories may be painful and hard for a child to discuss. You can share a past holiday of yours that had something silly happen to ease the child's fears. Reassure the child that their traditions and memories are important and should not be forgotten. Try to incorporate some of the child's traditions and expectations with your own holiday ideas. Be willing to make some compromises so that the child feels like an integral part of the family.

If the child is old enough, have them write about some of their holiday memories. This can be incorporated in their Life-book. Their past is always going to be a part of them and needs to have the memories to look back upon. If the child is too young to write, you can write down what they tell you. Have them draw pictures to go along with the story. If the child was in a previous foster home, see if you can get pictures of them from past holidays. Include these in their Life-book. Also, remember to take pictures of the holidays with you and the child for the child's Life-book because you are also a very important person in this child's life.



ALERT

Civil Penalties – Your Responsibilities

Amendments have been made to the current Health and Safety Codes that can affect you. Any individual that works or resides in a licensed facility aged 18 or older must be fingerprinted and have clearance or a criminal record exemption to be present in the home. Someone 18 or older staying with you for up to thirty days is considered a visitor and does not need to be fingerprinted.

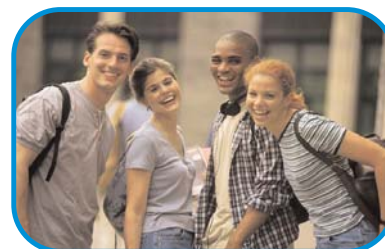
If your licensing worker determines that someone has been working or residing in your home that is required to have a criminal background clearance and it has not been done then they must cite you. You will be financially responsible for the penalty.

Penalties will be determined and assessed in the following manner: 1) it will be determined how long the individual has been in your facility, 2) you will be cited and 3) the civil penalty will be assessed immediately. Penalties will be \$100 per day up to a maximum of 5 days. If you have been cited for this same violation within the last 12 months then the civil penalty can continue at \$100 per day for a maximum of 30 days.

Penalties will be collected by San Bernardino County.

Please note that the civil penalty does not change the current requirements that the person must be removed from the facility and cannot return until they receive a clearance or criminal record exemption.

Any questions regarding this change can be directed to your licensing worker.



Holiday Safety Tips

The holidays are an exciting time of year for kids, and to help ensure they have a safe holiday season, here are some tips from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

Trees

- When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label "Fire Resistant."
- When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness. A fresh tree is green, needles are hard to pull from branches and when bent between your fingers, needles do not break. The trunk butt of a fresh tree is sticky with resin, and when tapped on the ground, the tree should not lose many needles.
- When setting up a tree at home, place it away from fireplaces, radiators or portable heaters. Place the tree out of the way of traffic and do not block doorways.
- Cut a few inches off the trunk of your tree to expose the fresh wood. This allows for better water absorption and will help to keep your tree from drying out and becoming a fire hazard.
- Be sure to keep the stand filled with water, because heated rooms can dry live trees out rapidly.

Lights

- Never use electric lights on a metallic tree. The tree can become charged with electricity from faulty lights, and a person touching a branch could be electrocuted.
- Before using lights outdoors, check labels to be sure they have been certified for outdoor use. To hold lights in place, string them through hooks or insulated staples, not nails or tacks. Never pull or tug lights to remove them.
- Check all tree lights-even if you've just purchased them-before hanging them on your tree. Make sure all the bulbs work and that there are no frayed wires, broken sockets or loose connections.
- Plug all outdoor electric decorations into circuits with ground fault circuit interrupters to avoid potential shocks.
- Turn off all lights when you go to bed or leave the house. The lights could short out and start a fire.

Decorations

- Use only non-combustible or flame-resistant materials to trim a tree. Choose tinsel or artificial icicles of plastic or unleaded metals.
- Never use lighted candles on a tree or near other evergreens. Always use non-flammable holders, and place candles where they will not be knocked down.
- In homes with small children, take special care to avoid decorations that are sharp or breakable, keep trimmings with small removable parts out of the reach of children to avoid the child swallowing or inhaling small pieces, and avoid trimmings that resemble candy or food that may tempt a young child to eat them.
- Wear gloves to avoid eye and skin irritation while decorating with spun glass "angel hair." Follow container directions carefully to avoid lung irritation while decorating with artificial snow sprays.
- Remove all wrapping papers, bags, paper, ribbons and bows from tree and fireplace areas after gifts are opened. These items can pose suffocation and choking hazards to a small child or can cause a fire if near flame.

Toy Safety

- Select toys to suit the age, abilities, skills and interest level of the intended child. Toys too advanced may pose safety hazards for younger children.
- Before buying a toy or allowing your child to play with a toy that he has received as a gift, read the instructions carefully.
- To prevent both burns and electrical shocks, don't give young children (under age ten) a toy that must be plugged into an electrical outlet. Instead, buy toys that are battery-operated.
- Children under age three can choke on small parts contained in toys or games. Government regulations specify that toys for children under age three cannot have parts less than 1 1/4 inches in diameter and 2 1/4 inches long.
- Children under age 8 can choke or suffocate on uninflated or broken balloons. Remove strings and ribbons from toys before giving them to young children.
- Watch for pull toys with strings that are more than 12 inches in length. They could be a strangulation hazard for babies.

Happy Visiting

- Clean up immediately after a holiday party. A toddler could rise early and choke on leftover food or come in contact with alcohol or tobacco.
- Remember that the homes you visit may not be childproofed. Keep an eye out for danger spots.
- Keep a laminated list with all of the important phone numbers you or a baby-sitter are likely to need in case of an emergency. Include the police and fire department, your pediatrician and the national Poison Help Line, 1-800-222-1222.
- Traveling, visiting family members, getting presents, shopping, etc., can all increase your child's stress levels. Trying to stick to your child's usual routines, including sleep schedules and timing of naps, can help you and your child enjoy the holidays and reduce stress.

Fireplaces

- Before lighting any fire, remove all greens, boughs, papers, and other decorations from fireplace area. Check to see that the flue is open.
- Use care with "fire salts," which produce colored flames when thrown on wood fires. They contain heavy metals that can cause intense gastrointestinal irritation and vomiting if eaten. Keep them away from children.
- Do not burn wrapping papers in the fireplace. A flash fire may result as wrappings ignite suddenly and burn intensely.

www.aap.org

Coming Attractions

In the near future more information will be coming to you with information about the following:

- **Library Cards for Foster Youth**
- **Prudent Parent**
- **Health screening for caretakers**

Foster Parent Association Update

Wow! There are two new foster parent/kinship care provider association representatives for San Bernardino County resource families.

Representing Foster and Relative Emphasis Association (FARE) is Robert Manghane. He has a difficult act to follow with Carolyn Buchanan being his predecessor in the leadership role of this association. He has been an active member of FARE along with his wife Colleen. The two of them together regularly attend the advisory board, retention meetings and conferences. We hope you enjoy your leadership roles mentoring those who look to you for guidance.

Esther Jett is the new president for GREAT/Kinship Care Foster Parent Association. She has been a caregiver for 10 years and a member of GREAT for approximately 8 years. Ida Valencia is turning over this chapter of GREAT to Esther Jett, while maintaining leadership of another chapter. Both of these magnificent women have been working side by side for years, sharing their homes, their hearts and expertise with many that asked. This association regularly holds their meetings in the city of Rancho Cucamonga. Please see the attached association list for meeting times and locations.

Please join us in welcoming our newly selected leadership for the caregivers in San Bernardino County. We look forward to working with each of them.

**If interested in becoming a foster/adoptive parent please call
1-800-722-4477 or (909) 891-3381.**



San Bernardino County
Department of Children's Services
Foster/Adoptive Home Services
412 W. Hospitality Lane, 2nd Floor
San Bernardino, CA 92415

PRESORTED
FIRST-CLASS MAIL
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
San Bernardino, CA
PERMIT No. 1677

Winter 2005



Foster/Adoptive Parent News



For the
Children

